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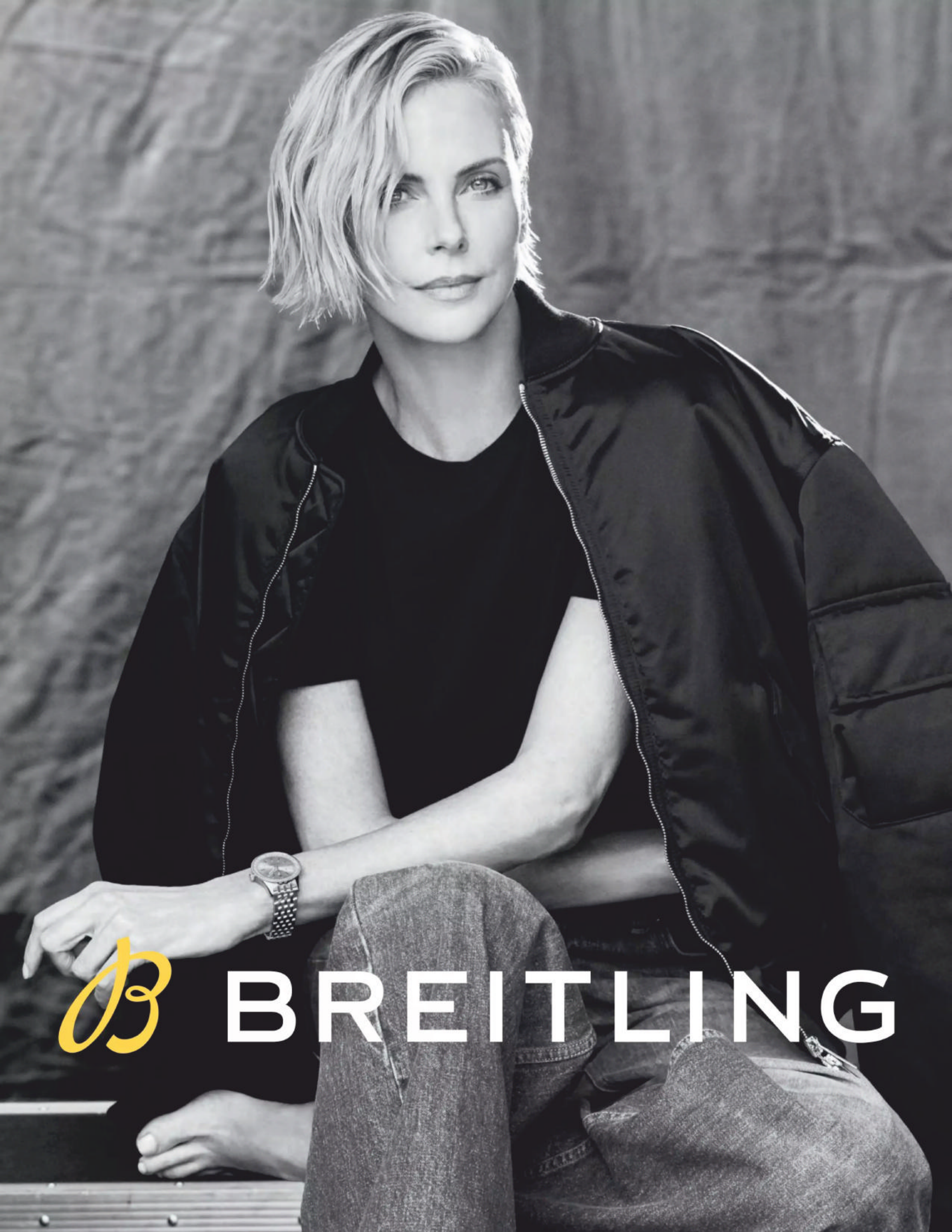
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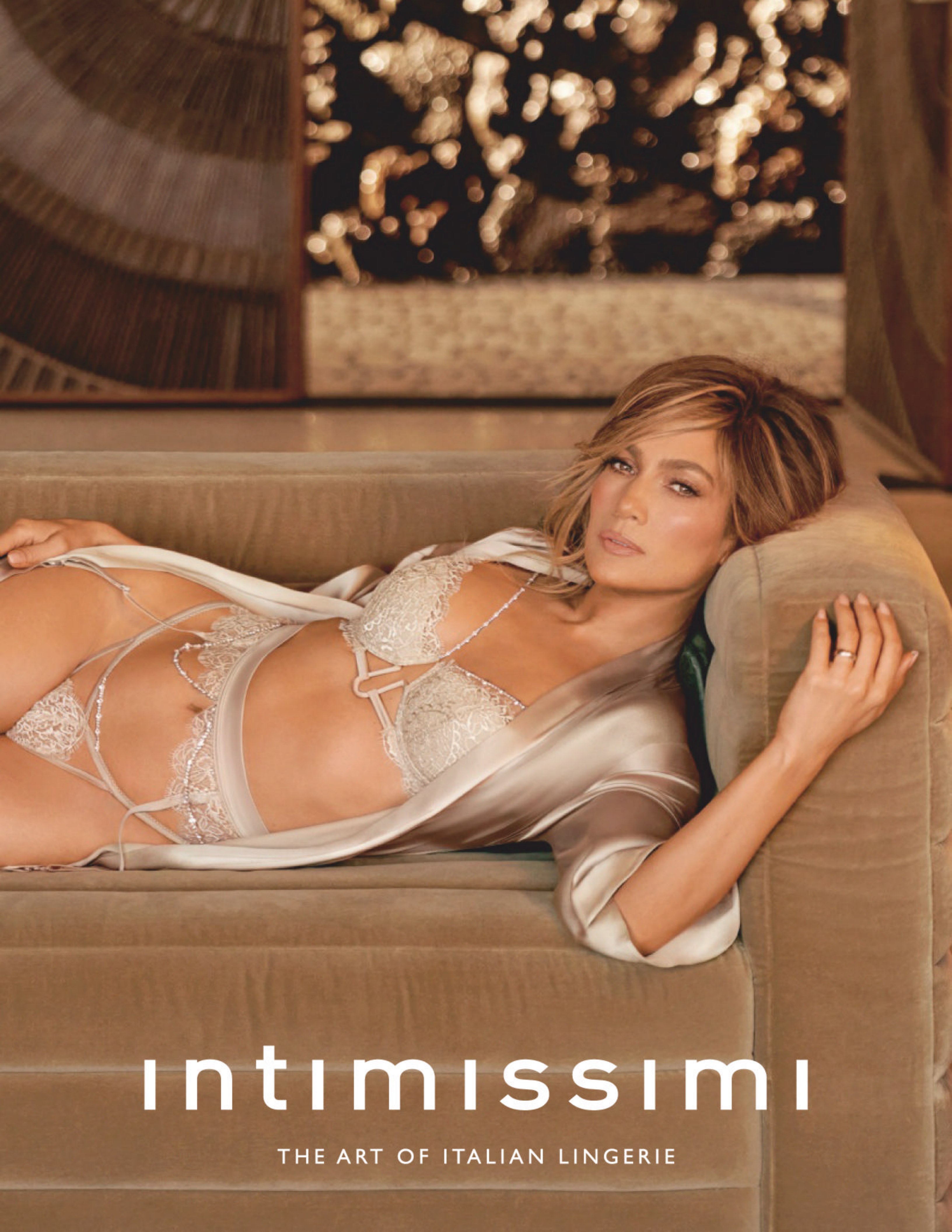
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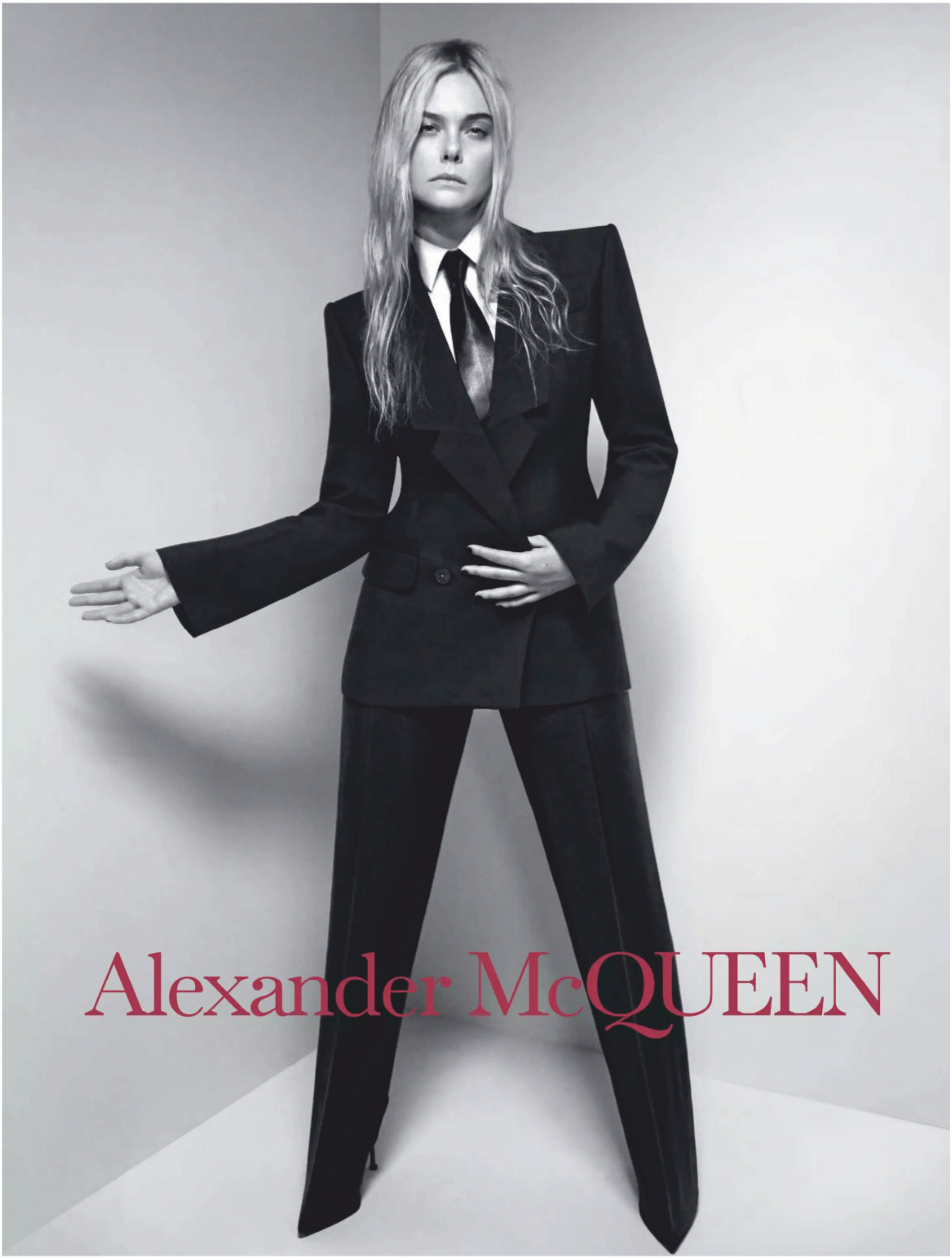
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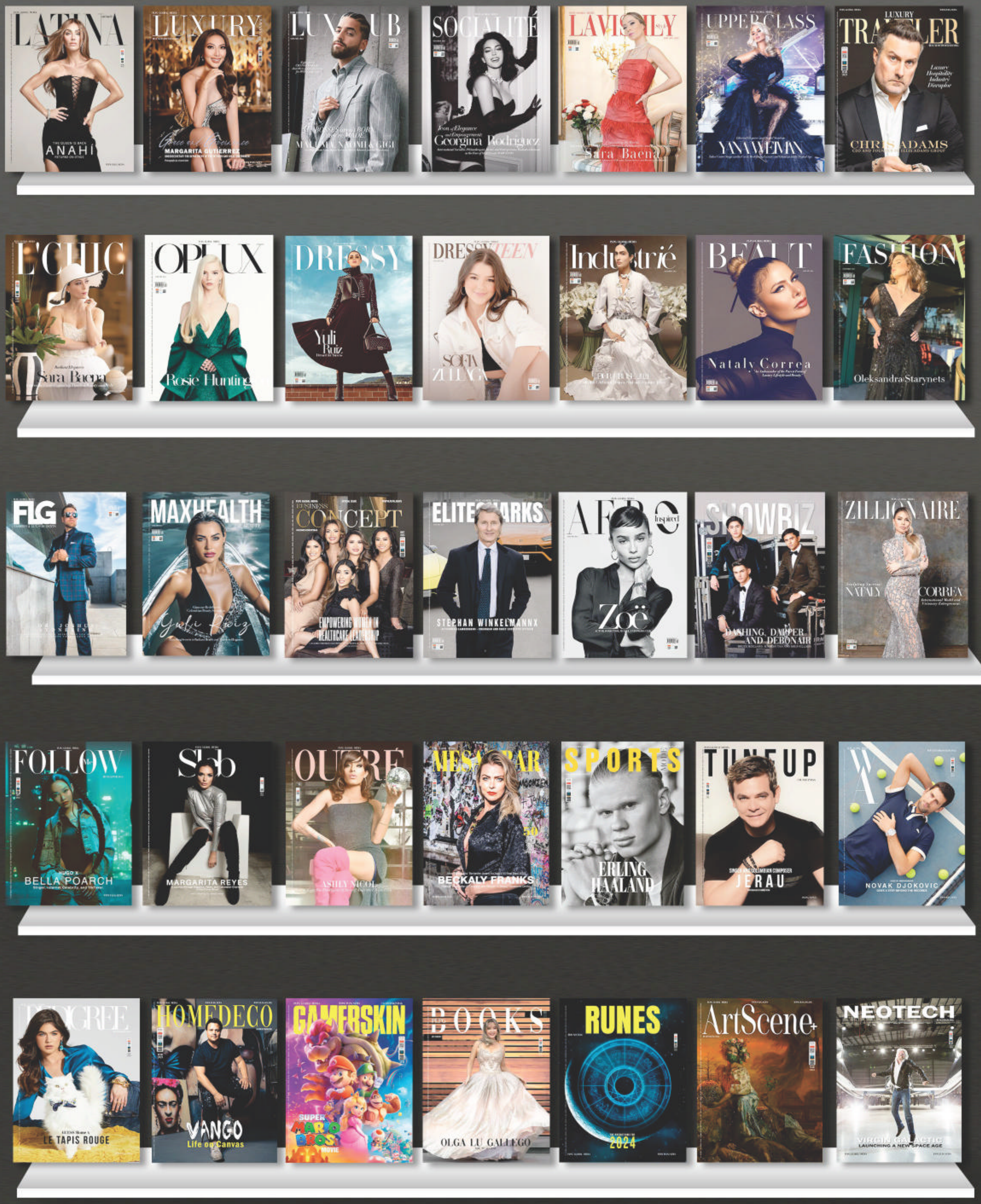
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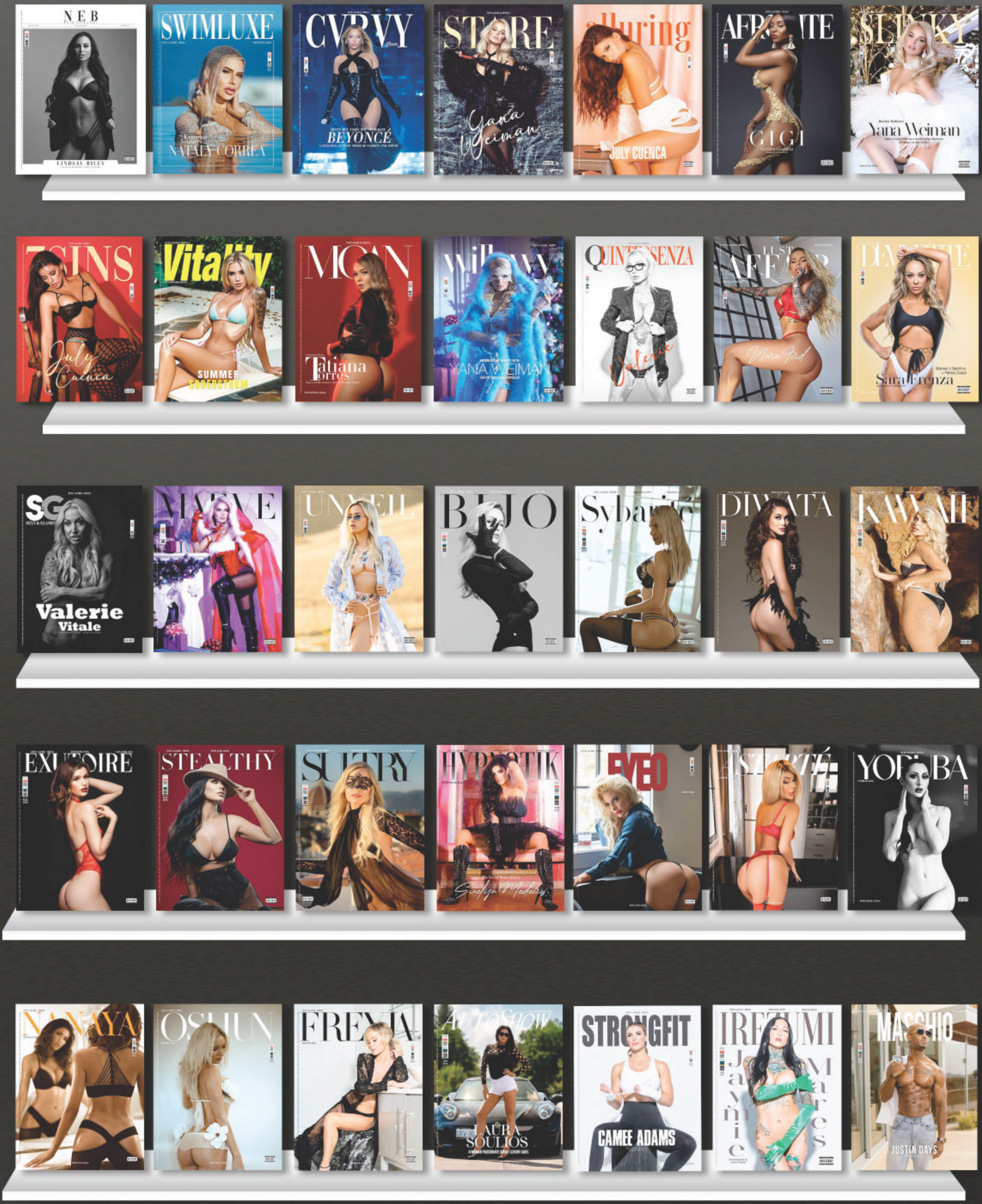
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Caroline GALANG TAOJO

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*Life is a journey that is deeply personal and so close to heart.
Caroline Galang-Taojo has found herself at a point
where everything seems to flow with ease and bloom in harmony.*

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BLOOMING WITH GRACE

By ***Emmanuel Rigoberto Tolentino***

As we travel through life, we either lose or find ourselves in the process. It is a chance to become either young fools again, or become more mature and grounded.

After graduating from college in the 80s, Bing found herself spending time with a teacher "Tita," who was into painting at that time. Already armed with a Doctor in Optometry degree neatly tucked under her belt, it sparked Bing's interest with creative expression, and she said to herself, "I want to paint." Completely fascinated she asked Tita to teach her the basics of painting.

Bing Taojo confesses that her grades in art class were not honor roll-worthy and not exactly that encouraging. But her new-found passion was mightier and just waiting to be unleashed. Back then, she used textile as her canvas. Towels, napkins, hankies, and blankets became much-coveted materials for her initial attempts at painting.

But the universe had other plans, and her early forays into artistry has to take a back seat when Bing got married. Her days were chockful with to-dos, and her life revolved around being a loving and devoted wife to her husband, nurturing mother to her children, and keeping house to her growing family.

Bing Taojo admits that aside from her creative mentors, she gets inspired when she see beautiful artworks. She feels a special connection with the artist of each piece, as if they're whispering to her, encouraging her to continue and pursue her artistry. What she loves about her art is that it allows her to create a beautiful and lasting legacy worthy of sharing to both the present and future generations. At the same time, she feels that God is beyond generous to give her the means, the time, and talent to paint.

Asked whether she would consider enrolling in a fine arts degree, "Most probably short courses and workshops only," she replies wistfully. "I don't think I can endure the rigors of complying school requirements," she adds with a girlish smile and a wink.

Caroline "Bing" Galang-Taojo has been collecting artworks by Filipino masters since late 90s. As CFO of the family business and matriarch of a big family, she has little time to pursue other interests. She reads when time permits. But if there's one thing that is a must-do and must-have every day, its prayer time. "It is paramount to my every day," she avows.

Her other pursuits notwithstanding and now that her children are raising families of their own, Bing picked up the brush once again. "It took painstaking years of practice before I became happy with my work," she points out.

Bing discloses that admittedly, there are no shortcuts in life, and people have to work hard to achieve their dreams. The frustrations and disappointments are inevitable, and part of the journey of self-discovery. "Patience and determination are virtues that pay-off big time in the long run," she says emphatically.

Her current creative turn is her favorite from among her body of work. "I think I am partial to the series which I'm doing now where the subject are flowers. The series is made up of different sizes of canvas, mostly huge. I like it because I have finally achieved the style that I've been attempting to paint for a long time. I am also happy with the color palette that I have developed," she asserts with a proud glint in her eyes.

She looks up to a lot of artists, both local and international. Given a chance, she would have wanted to visit the studio of Vincent Van Gogh, the Dutch Post-Impressionist painter who is among the most famous and influential figures in the history of Western art, and talk to him.

She reveals that just recently, she, together with her sister visited the Van Gogh Alive Digital Exhibit Bangkok. “I was so overwhelmed to tears. There were insights from him which made me say, he seemed to be a nice person. He could impart important values on top of his journey as artist,” Bing says of the experience.

Bing Galang-Taojo loves American modernist painter Georgia O’Keefe, and Isabel Diaz for their flowers; French Post-Impressionist painters Paul Cezanne and Paul Gauguin, plus Russian-French artist Marc Chagall for their colors; Japanese contemporary artist Yayoi Kusama for her longevity in the arts; and Filipino and award-winning cartoonist, illustrator, and fine arts painter Mauro Malang Santos for his evolution from cartoonist to high value artist.

She also pays tribute to Filipino painter Benedicto Reyes Cabrera, better known as “BenCab”, despite his achievements, he remains compassionate to other artists. Awarded National Artist of the Philippines for Visual Arts in 2006, Bencab is renowned as arguably the best-selling painter of his generation.

Bing also makes special mention of Filipina actress, painter, and global fashion icon, Heart Evangelista-Escudero, her good friend who inspires her to aspire for lofty goals.

Among Filipino artists, Isabel Diaz is her favorite. Isabel Diaz is a Filipino-born New York-based artist specializing in oil on canvas. Diaz is known for her ability to distill entities down to their essence and rebuild them in a minimalist yet expressive style. “I’m a fan of her huge flowers,” Bing enthuses. “I usually paint flowers and human figures. Flowers as subject is versatile. It is pleasant to have them in any room, living room, foyer, bedroom, work places,” Bing adds.

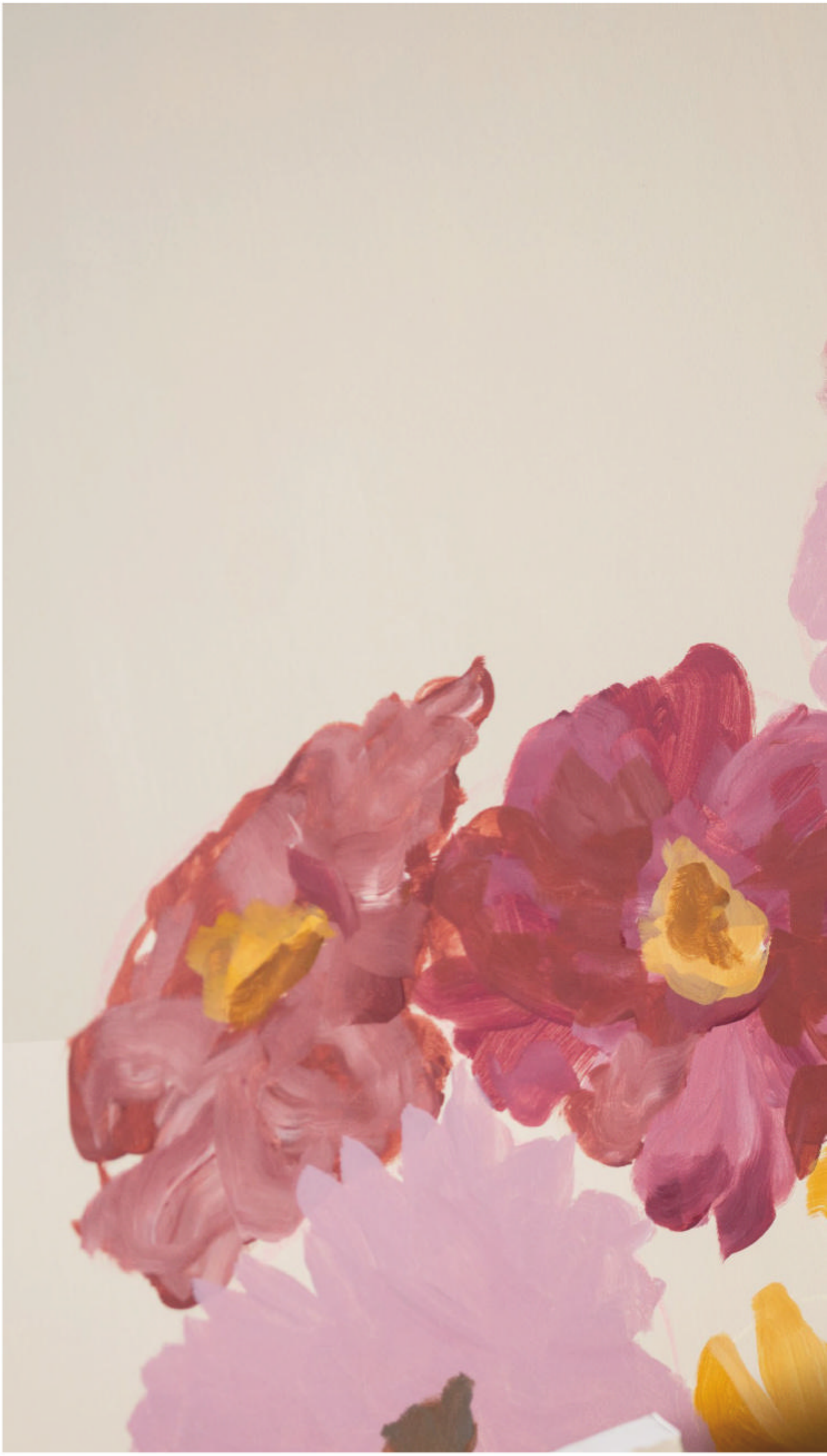
Her artistic style is classified as impressionism according to her mentor. Personally, she believes that her distinct style is called "Accessible Abstract," based on one of her favorite books.

She would have loved to do oil, but for health reasons she uses acrylic, which she has mastered and grown accustomed with. "Acrylic paint dries up easily which works best with my layering technique," she explains.

With her new-found creative fervor, Bing Galang-Taojo wants to tell her fans and captive audience that it is never too late to achieve one's dream in life, and that even house wives, mothers, or grandmothers can still chase after their dreams and create a name for themselves. "You can immortalize yourself through the paintings that you pass on to the next generation. Believe in yourself, never rest on your laurels and continue learning." she reveals.

At this stage in her life, Bing looks forward to gracefully bloom as her own person, a dedicated wife, a loving mother, and doting grandmother.

"Success for me is when your art becomes a tool to make this world a better place," she says with pride. True to her creative roots, the Filipino culture is much palpable feature in her subjects she lovingly conjures on canvas. "I love to depict the mundane life in our local market places," she tells us.



And while she would choose motherhood if she was not an artist, Caroline Galang-Taojo dreams of mounting an exhibit in a notable venue and wishes for her captivating pieces to earn a significant place in an internationally renowned art exhibition like Art Basel, the international art fair staged annually in Basel, Switzerland; Miami Beach and Hong Kong; the Royal Arts Academy at Piccadilly in London, England; La Biennale in Italy; and the Moderne Art Fair, a fair for modern art, contemporary art and design in Paris, France.

Looking back at her life, she wishes she had resurrected her painting career earlier in her marriage and taken more painting and art workshops to polish her skills and hone her innate God-given talents. "Perhaps by now, I would have a more extensive body of work to share to my expanding audience." She would also tell her younger self, "There is a good life ahead of you," if given the opportunity to come face-to-face with the Bing Galang of her youth.

Bing Taojo wants to be remembered for bringing happiness into the lives of the people she has known and touched with her one-of-a-kind artistry. She has a lot to be tankful for. "Life has always been good, and my most fervent prayers have been answered with a shower of abundant blessings."

She urges young and up-and-coming creatives and talents aspire to learn as much as they can, and expose themselves to museums, art books, and the works of masters. "Do not settle for mediocrity, and remain humble and kind no matter how prominent and successful you become," Bing reminds today's young breed of visual story tellers.

"Life has always been good, and my most fervent prayers have been answered with a shower of abundant blessings."

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She is deeply grateful and appreciative for the valuable lessons she learned from the workshops of Victor Dumaguing and Mean Tan; and the priceless techniques picked from the workshop by Ega Carreon which opened her eyes to the beauty of uncontrived art. "I am also grateful to the valuable lessons shared by Betsy Brias de Westendorp especially on sourcing of materials and marketing my paintings. I also derive encouragement when the likes of artists Marivic Rufino, well-known Filipino visual artist, water colorist, writer, concert producer, and business woman; and Kublai Millan, a prolific artist from Mindanao, known for his giant sculptures, and who is also an art photographer, painter, digital artist and performance artist, acknowledge my talent." She declares.

Over the next 5 to 10 years, Bing looks forward to continue her artistic metamorphosis and produce masterpieces that will not just simply enthrall the viewers but also immortalize the name of Caroline "Bing" Galang-Taojo in the world of Philippine contemporary art.

The path from her provincial lass beginnings to becoming an optometrist, a loving mom to four grown up kids, and now her flourishing career as an artist was not exactly an easy one but rather littered with a bagful of ups and downs and everything in between, certainly unpredictable.

Her insatiable love for the arts coupled with boundless imagination and firm determination augured well for Bing's chosen path.

Caroline "Bing" Galang-Taojo will continue doing what she is known for but is always open to stretching herself artistically. As she goes through with her life in the rough and tumble world that we live in, she is constantly reminded that in art, as in life, there are no accidental or wrong turns, only paths she never expected but were meant for her to walk along as she blossoms into the person and artist that she is meant to be.

Annette GOZON VALDES

@annettegozonvaldes

*The animated storyteller. The born creative. The innovative visionary.
One woman shares her tales as the Senior Vice President of GMA Worldwide
and the President of GMA Films of the Philippines' GMA "Kapuso" Network.*

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INTO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

By ***Suzanne Faelnar***

"Angels are like diamonds. They can't be made. You have to find them. Each one is unique." This quote is attributed to the famous American actress, Jaclyn Smith, who was renowned for her role as one of the original stars in the 1970s hit television show, Charlie's Angels. It's easy to see how apt such a description would be for another lady in the industry. She's not an actress but certainly a celebrity in her own right, dazzling and shining bright. She's like an angel—a luminous, spirited, and cheerful being—taking center stage in the local media and entertainment industry as a top honcho with a big heart, alongside her father, Atty. Felipe Lapuz Gozon, in the Philippines' leading radio and free-television network. Catching up and conversing with Annette Gozon-Valdes was a laughter-filled delight.

Suzanne: How would you describe Philippine entertainment? What makes Filipino talent unique and attractive to the global audience?

Annette: We inject our own culture into the dramas. I think that will make it more appealing to the international audience because they will see something new. It's like they are educated into our own culture which they don't usually see. The strength of our dramas also is that we can show how close the families are in the Philippines compared to other cultures.

Suzanne: How are Philippine telenovelas comparable to Latin America's or to South Korea's K-wave? Some might remember the '90s Mexican hit series, Marimar. How was your version distinctly Filipino?

Annette: What I noticed about Philippine entertainment, especially dramas, is that we have the same sensitivities as the South Americans and Koreans. The South American telenovelas are usually fast paced, with over-the-top plotlines and facial reactions, very exciting scenes, and strong antagonists. The Filipino audience loves it. That's very similar to our style—the comics style. Before TV came into existence, people were reading their dramas from comic books so it's more of that style. Maybe twenty years ago, it was really South American dramas that were the number one canned dramas in the Philippines. That's why we did remakes of *Marimar* and *Rosalinda*. We made it a point to insert our own cultural nuances into our version of *Marimar* to be more relatable to our audience. The ending was over the top where we had the main antagonist eaten by a crocodile! We introduced Korean dramas around 2005 to 2006 and they did very, very well. Their scenes really milk the emotions and show various angles. They are more slow-paced but very emotional. We also have their emotional sensitivity. In a way, Filipinos both enjoy those types of dramas. And that's also how we make our dramas. So, we probably have the same background or sensitivities with both these parts of the world. It's like two different flavors, like chocolate and vanilla.

Suzanne: Let's talk about the historical drama series, Maria Clara at Ibarra, which won a Bronze award at the 2023 New York Festivals TV and Film Awards! Congratulations!

Annette: Yes! That's based on the novels of our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. When we were conceptualizing it, we really wanted to make a drama out of it for the younger generation to be re-introduced to these two novels and to love these novels. It took a long time for us to produce. If the drama were lifted straight from the books, we were scared it might be boring and have an antiquated appeal. So, what we did was inject this Gen Z character, this person from the present who woke up inside the book with the story unfolding before her eyes. Luckily, it became a very big hit. What was good about it was that a lot of kids had a great interest in reading books. Bookstores were telling us that they had to reprint (the novel).

Suzanne: What inspired you? Apart from trying to get Gen Z to relate with it, was there something that inspired you to bring this character to life in the past?

Annette: Well, we wanted to promote nationalism more because we feel that with the global economy and the internet, the youth are global citizens and might be forgetting their love for country. So, we were saying, maybe we do this, so they'll have this renewed nationalism in their hearts. They'll love the country and help the country become better. That's one of the main goals of that drama.

Suzanne: I'm sure they could see that the social problems then still exist.

Annette: Yes! A lot of the comments from that drama said that. So even if the novel was written in the 1800s, they could relate with the problems and similar issues. And in this drama, the nice thing is, we also promoted women empowerment. Because of course, in the 1800s, it was a totally different matter. But this Gen Z female that went into the story really promoted female empowerment and I think that's one of the things that viewers really liked.

Suzanne: Which female character do you relate with?

Annette: Personally, I'm also very conservative. There's still a *Maria Clara* inside of me. (laughs)

Suzanne: Tell us something about *Voltes V: Legacy*, your adaptation into a live-action sci-fi series of the '70s animation, Voltes V. And how do you take advantage of technology? How deeply immersed is the production with it? Are you the first network locally to use AI?

Annette: I think the strength of that show is really the special effects. The special effects team were all Filipinos, and they did such a good job. That's one thing we're very proud of. We can show that the Philippines can already rival the international teams. To be able to still be competitive in this world, we really do have to keep up with all the latest technologies. A lot of these are advantageous for us and make our lives more efficient, easier. Artificial Intelligence (AI), I think, is a worldwide issue. Currently, we're coming up with policies regarding this because we want to balance embracing all the new technologies with protecting our workforce. We added more human reporters this year from last year. The AI reporters that we used were like a complementary thing and no one lost any job. We're treading this as the whole world is treading on this issue. But I think that we can't not do it because the technology is there and there might be a way to have a win-win situation for all. It's a great technology. Let's see how we can use it more in the future.

Suzanne: Would you be dreaming that one day you would have a whole row of seats in those big awards in the US?

Annette: Actually, we haven't been able to do that yet but that's the dream of every Filipino movie producer, that one day, our entry to the Oscars. There's an international entry.

Suzanne: How did the term "*Kapuso*" (One in heart) get coined?

Annette: When my dad became President and CEO in around the year 2000, we wanted to rebrand GMA and its programming. That was the time when GMA thought of rebranding even in terms of how it calls its audience. We created our new theme song and logo. That's when *"Kapuso"* was born.

Suzanne: Well, that brings me back to you. I read about the Battle of the Judges and saw your performance. You sing well! How was that for you?

Annette: I was forced into that show. (laughs) They wanted a representative from the network—an executive who could share some expertise—so they chose me. The show's producers said there was going to be a production number. All the judges had to do something. I was the only one in front of the camera who was not a performer. All others were showbiz people.

Suzanne: What's one of the funniest moments you've had on a production set that got everyone laughing?

Annette: A funny thing happened during this one production of the *Battle of the Judges*. It's a franchise reality show. During the first time it aired in Southeast Asia, we had contestants battling it out. Prior to the show, we had to prepare these contestants with practice sessions. On the day of one of the tapings, I woke up late because of a taping from the previous day. I was thinking so hard about what my contestants would do. And when I arrived at the set, I had different shoes on! Yes! They were probably the same height. When my contestant won, they called me on the stage. They said, "Oh, it might be my lucky charm so do it again." (laughs)

Suzanne: You might have started a trend! I saw a clip somewhere of Hea...

Annette: Heart Evangelista! I saw her recent clip. She was wearing a white shoe and a red shoe.

Suzanne: Did she copy you? (laughs)

Annette: I don't know. But I was the first! Just kidding! (laughs)

Suzanne: Which means you really are an innovator. From being a lawyer to this, is such a different world. How was the transition? Where are you more inclined?

Annette: At first, I was scared because I didn't know if I could do the job in the entertainment industry. From the start, when I was very young, my goal was to be a lawyer. I just finished my Masters. I was a lawyer for maybe one or two years. Then suddenly, I was thrust into media. But then I embraced it because I realized that I love creating stories. I love creating concepts. I love programming. So, I don't know. Maybe God opened a door for me that I never want to go back again to the other side. (laughs) That's what I enjoy in my work. Not the finance, HR, or legal side. I was still made SVP of the legal and HR departments so I could still use my legal knowledge. But it's the content creation that I love. It's the creativity that I love.

“We have top principles.
The first is to put God above all.
That’s our number one motto.”

Suzanne: On the creative side, is it like playing for you?

Annette: Actually, I love it. I was part of the drama creative teams for so many years now. It's so nice working with them because I think they're really secure in themselves. They're so confident. If someone gives an idea, and if there's something nice in that idea, they build on it. Everyone builds on top of each idea until we come up with this really great idea. Encantadia, Mulawin, and Maria Clara at Ibarra were from that process. It's really gratifying for me to be working with such a great team of creatives.

Suzanne: How is your fan base? (laughs)

Annette: Well, I'm verified on Instagram. (laughs) But there are only a few about–38,000 only–not that much. I post a lot of bible verses. I post a lot of things about God. So that's how I try to use my Instagram. At least I have a lot of followers who can read these things everyday. I make it a point on "Stories" always.

Suzanne: What drives you? And what is the most important part of your day?

Annette: When I work, I want to work as if I'm working for the Lord. That's my purpose. I always want to not forget that in everything I do, I have to give glory to God. It belongs to Him. He gave me my talents. I'm just a steward of the talents that He gave me. So, I have to always try to remember to do everything for His glory. The most important part of my day is really spending time in prayer. That really sets the tone of your day. Whatever stress comes, whatever problem comes, you're equipped already. We (in GMA) have top principles. The first is to put God above all. That's our number one motto.

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CELEBRATE MAGNIFICENT WONDERS

Captivating the World:
International Model, Philanthropist, Psychologist, and Businesswoman

Sara
Baena

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Unveiling a Multifaceted Journey of Beauty, Benevolence, and Business Brilliance.

Sara Baena

is a very recognized model , artist and philanthropist.

Being in the model industry so long time have her the opportunity to create her own business. She has a great social community.

Sara is originally from Medellín, Colombia. She studied psychology in a very prestigious university, she got her diploma and worked for a while helping teenagers. But her great successes came in the model industry.

She was also developing a career in this field, that is not easy and she did in a very professional way. She was part of some model agencies during different periods and once, she learned enough she became independent as a model , and sometimes she uses the service of a manager.

For 13 years Sara did not stop working as a model. And at the same time she got married and had a kid.

She started to develop her modeling carrier even farther, including her lifestyle. She started to create unique content for her public. She was putting her daily routines with yoga, wellness and mom's life tips. As psychologist she also, as we know, she launched a book that talk about healing body and mind that is available and she is working on the translation to English so she can share it with her public in the US community.

nève
AILLERIE
FÉVRERIE
LARD
se Horloge
HELLE

Genève
JOAILLERIE
ORFEVRERIE
BILLARD
Rue Grosse Horloge
A ROCHELLE

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Katrina
PONCE ENRILE

@ponceenrile

A senator's daughter. An entrepreneur. A woman of substance. Through a string of experiences, she is in her element, naturally confident, and comfortable in her capacity to bring the change she and her people want to see in their distant shores.

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THE PEARL OF THE ORIENT'S MADAM SECRETARY

*By **Suzanne Faelnar***

"The Pearl is the queen of gems and the gem of queens." In that one short sentence, real-life Princess Grace Kelly of Monaco summed up her thoughts on a small thing of great value. Less succinctly, the Philippines is often noted for its wealth of natural resources and holds so much value to the world, dotting the Pacific Ocean like a loose strand of pearls. Its group of islands has been collectively known by rather endearing names throughout its history. It has been called *"Perla del Mar de Oriente"* (Pearl of the Orient Seas) with adoration by one of its national heroes. It has been referred to with ardent love as *"hija del sol Oriente",* translated into the line *"Perlas ng Silanganan"* in its national anthem. It is one of those few places on earth whose bounty soars above the peaks of mountains and beneath the crests of its ocean's waves. At the northernmost region crowning the nation is a place that is being polished like a natural pearl in an oyster shell. As captivating as the South Sea Pearl, herself, one woman is at the helm, steering the rudder to ensure the region is protected with hopes to bring it to polish and luster. She is the newly appointed Madame Secretary Katrina Ponce Enrile.

Suzanne: Let's backtrack a bit and get to know you better. Who is Katrina Ponce Enrile?

Katrina: I'm the daughter of Juan Ponce Enrile—former Senate President, former Secretary of Defense, former Senator, former Congressman. And now Secretary Ponce Enrile also is the Chief Legal Counsel of the current sitting president. So, there are two "Secretary Ponce Enriles" in the cabinet of President (Ferdinand) Marcos right now. I was only 5 years old when my father joined the government. Growing up, that's the life that I knew. I didn't know any other life outside of us being in politics. So, everybody thought that I was going to eventually get involved in politics. I've been in the private sector all my life and just got recently appointed to the position of administrator with a cabinet rank.

I am also a mother of four, a grandmother of four, a businesswoman, and entrepreneur. I love animals. I have 43 dogs. Except for one, they're Corgis. I have over 100 birds in my house. Animal-loving comes from my mom's side. My mom is an artist too. She's the one who does plays. She's the coloratura type of soprano who sings and does Broadway and all that. I've loved plants even before the pandemic. I love makeup. I'm a makeup addict. And I am the creator of (the brand) Delimondo which is not just corned beef.

Suzanne: How close is your family?

Katrina: Every Saturday, we have mass together. And we have dinner together with the grandkids and whoever is with us. Then New Year just happens to be my mom's birthday. So, I've never had a date on New Year's Day. And My dad's birthday is on Valentine's Day. So, on Valentine's Day, I've never had a date.

My eldest daughter is going to turn 45 this January. My son's turning 40 this November. The next one is turning 31 next year, and my youngest one is 24. I'm an empty nester. The two older ones are married. I have *apos* (grandchildren)– Kara and JR, Kristen in San Francisco, and Cristiana in L.A. who's a singer songwriter and independent recording artist in the US. Kristen is more like me in terms of what we like. She likes makeup. So that's why we put up "The Makeup Addicts" blog when she was still here. I cannot do that anymore. I have to be serious now.

Suzanne: Does that conflict with your role as secretary?

Katrina: No, but I have to behave.

Suzanne: Name a dream or passion you are now living or pursuing.

Katrina: I've always wanted to be in government because I always idolized my father. Now, I'm in government, serving. I've always wanted to serve the Filipino people and that is one thing I am able to do. The other thing that I really wanted to do was to be a singer but obviously, I didn't have the guts to sing. At least my youngest daughter is pursuing that, and I am happy for her. I'm living that dream through her. Her name by the way is Tiana Kocher.

“Freedom is there for you to be able to live your life in a very peaceful and orderly way.”

MOËT

Suzanne: What inspired you to accept your appointment as the administrator and chief executive officer of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA)? What do you envision under your 5-year leadership term?

Katrina: For the very first time, there is an appointment by a President of a female administrator. I'm the first female administrator of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA). All the prior administrators came from different parts of the country, not really knowing the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of Sta. Ana. But now, you not only have a female administrator who is very detail-oriented, and who hails from the area. My roots are from here. So, my take on being the secretary here is more intentional because St. Ana and CEZA are one and the same. All of Sta. Ana and a portion of Aparri is the whole of CEZA.

This is a clean canvas to work on and some people might look at it as a daunting task, but I accept the challenge because the beauty of it is that I can mold it into something that will serve future generations. That is why I always emphasize future proofing this whole area because what I'm going to do now is not for me but for the future generation, not only for Sta. Ana, but of the Philippines.

I want to be able to spearhead the change and the direction that needs to be done to preserve, conserve, and develop the area for the future generations. Also, to be able to emulate so that they will all be able to imbue in them a culture of paying homage to the beauty of Sta. Ana, be proud ambassadors later, and be the gatekeepers as well for the generations to come. I'm going to make sure that it will be authentically Filipino in the Sta. Ana way, in the Cagayan way, but with all the amenities of having redundancy when it comes to telecommunications and broadband.

The Philippines is going to be facing a power crisis. In Sta. Ana, I'm really going to push the whole area to go green. Although green energy will take time, we will transition from fossil fuels to a cleaner source of energy and eventually be able to shift. Right now, we are off grid. We have our local electric cooperative but it's very unstable. It's one of the problems that I face that I want to be able to solve.

I'm also going to make sure that there's clean water and irrigated lands. We are going to make it a highly digitalized area with fast broadband, and with a slower pace of life. We are going to modernize a city but not one devastated with the ills of the industrial world. We will protect our people from the loss of jobs with the coming of artificial intelligence. A good chunk of their needs is going to be met through a foundation that I will set up.

Suzanne: How bountiful is the north in terms of nature and biodiversity? What characteristics of your hometown and its people would attract tourists and investors?

Katrina: What best characterizes my hometown, Sta. Ana? Well, it is a coastal town and it's almost the same size as Singapore. We have 35,000 hectares (over 86,480 acres) of forests, beautiful white sand beaches. We have mountains, forests, wetlands, and mangroves. There are also migratory birds. That is one of the things that makes us distinct. We have a port, an airport just 45 minutes away, and lots of ecotourism potential—untapped and very raw.

The people are mostly Ilocanos and Ibanags—very hardworking people. They are very friendly and well-educated. They are multilingual and usually speak 4 languages: English, Tagalog, Ibanag, and Ilocano. We have a lot of fishermen because of all that coastline. You will see dolphins and turtles. We are very close to Benham Rise on the Pacific side. We have Palaui Island which Condé Nast named as one of top ten beaches in the world, and we have Cape Engaño, one of the oldest lighthouses in the Philippines built during the Spanish time.

This area—I call it enchanted because it's so idyllic. I just really want to promote it and allow the culture in Sta. Ana and the Ibatan areas in the Batanes, to filter down so that visitors will see that this is unlike anything that they have seen anywhere else.

It's easier for me to be able to control the development of the tourist areas into a low-density type of tourism. We want to be able to attract high-end clients. In our country, I think there is room now, as in any other country, for a 6-star or even a 7-star hotel to come in as people need privacy and a place to declutter their minds, rejuvenate, and do nothing. I have to make a distinction in developing in that way. The tourists and investors that will come will be able to see right away that there is a lot of potential.

Suzanne: What prepared you for this role? What background and experience contributes best to this role fitting like a glove on you?

Katrina: I guess everything in my life prepared me for this role. I've traveled the world, had my education, mentored by my father, Juan Ponce Enrile, I've listened to the best, learned from the best. All the experiences, all the mistakes I've made have taught me and prepared me for this role. I think I'm fully prepared to be able to take this role as president and chief executive officer and administrator.

Suzanne: How do you achieve your work-life balance?

Katrina: That's a problem for me because everybody thinks I'm superhuman and that I can do everything. A lot of people expect so much from me. Right now, I have two aging parents that I'm taking care of. I have four children and four grandchildren. I had a lot of responsibilities in the private sector then, and now with the government, there are even more responsibilities. I really have a mission in my life right now to be able to turn CEZA around and future-proof Sta. Ana. I think at the end of my term as administrator, I would hope that I would have left something of value to CEZA and all the employees that are part of CEZA and to the people of Sta. Ana. That is something I'm looking forward to and hope that I will achieve that and surprise everybody, even myself.

Suzanne: If you could define what constitutes the wealth of a nation, or of a people in a single word, what would your top three words be and why?

Katrina: I think the wealth of a nation comes from an educated youth that will be highly competitive; a country that is peaceful so everybody can thrive, live, and choose; and a country that is free to make those choices. So, it would be education; safety and security; peace and freedom. Freedom by the way is not absolute. Freedom is there for you to be able to live your life in a very peaceful and orderly way. That's the kind of freedom I am espousing. Freedom—if you are free and equal. That's a good legacy for a country.

Tabbie
ORTIGAS DUARTE

@jellyj800

To be both blue and natural is a rarity.
That's a scientific fact regarding the occurrence of blue coloration in nature.
It could also ring true regarding one woman who,
born into prominence and affluence, exudes a certain ease and spirit
–qualities that could be hallmarks of her own legacy.

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BLOOMING WITH GRACE

By ***Emmanuel Rigoberto Tolentino***

“The beauty of a woman is seen in her eyes because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides. True beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul. It’s the caring that she lovingly gives, the passion that she shows and the beauty of a woman only grows with passing years.” Such insight from the unforgettable and iconic goodwill ambassador and advocate, Audrey Hepburn, seems an intuitive choice for this introduction. There can be no better commonality best shared among women than that of their interior qualities. The Honorary Consul of the Philippines to El Salvador Ms. Maria Josefina B. Ortigas de Duarte is subtle with her identity. Known simply as Tabbie to her peers, she plays her role in society with a forthright yet understated demeanor. With roots from Spain, she is a classic Filipina wholeheartedly.

In the Philippines, the Ortigas name is synonymous to progress through financial and real estate and development especially in Metropolitan Manila within the National Capital Region. The story of Tabbie’s ancestry begins with her great-great-grandfather, Ignacio Ortigas y Blanc, who arrived on a ship from Spain to Manila over a century and a half ago in 1861. He was an army Captain and Commander later stationed in the Province of Pampanga where he met and married Asuncion Barcinas y Tuason. She raised their three sons as a young, widowed mother. The youngest son, Paco, would later embark on real estate ventures including the purchase of 4,033 hectares (close to 10,000 acres) of land, and form a business partnership with Vicente Madrigal among others. Francisco “Don Paco” Ortigas, Sr. then passed on the legacy to his son Francisco “Don Paquito” Ortigas, Jr. who would bring forth a greater, transformative vision for the Ortigas and Company. Today, the well-known Ortigas Center alone, where institutional landmarks such the Asian Development Bank Headquarters are located, spans three cities.

Figuratively speaking, Tabbie is of generational blue blood, through the Ortigas and Madrigal lineage, which most certainly flows into her distinctly divergent path and personal narrative. Although she is not much involved in Ortigas Land nor the Ortigas Foundation, it is evident that she has a naturally perspicacious grasp and perspective on urban development, particularly in the Philippines and in these changing times. Her comprehension of development sine qua nons is translated through social advancement and progress with a sensitivity towards a climate precarious time; therefore, her advocacy in favor of communities is deeply impassioned and rather warm-blooded. It just so happens that this year, the 72nd Miss Universe Pageant finds hospitality in El Salvador, the second Latin American nation to host the event in decades. The nation has enjoyed formal diplomatic ties with the Philippines for over three quarters of a century. Tabbie’s views on “beauty” evoke a patriotic coloration and clarity as well. She is, herself, an affirmation of the genteel and modern Filipina. Beyond official and state obligations, she is the quintessential matron. Her heart finds its embrace with effortless zeal through her passion for food and for providing palatable gourmet delights as a consummate host to those most precious to her.

Although a very private person, Tabbie is quite gracious to provide a glance at her thoughts.

Suzanne: How would you describe the beauty of the Philippines and its people?

Tabbie: The Philippines and Filipinos are full of charm and beauty in our hospitality, in our smiles, in our imperfections, in our simplicity, and our warmth and openness towards other cultures. I think it’s a wonderful custom that when someone enters our home, we right away offer them something to drink or eat—our custom of sharing our meal to those invited or uninvited.

Suzanne: As an entrepreneur of Spanish descent, how much influence, in your opinion, does the country’s Spanish heritage still hold on the Filipino food industry?

Tabbie: There’s a lot of influence, particularly regarding cuisine, and it has become more accessible and affordable for everyone. This is not surprising, due to the cultural diversity of the Philippines which has played a great impact on Filipinos having a very sophisticated palate compared to most nationalities. This is seen in all the types of restaurants and places to eat available.

Since "beauty" is very subjective, it must transcend the physical and take into account that which is "non" and what makes the individual or woman as a "whole person."

LAVISHLY Style

Suzanne: What local or foreign food culture would you wish to see more of in the local dining scene?

Tabbie: Perhaps more Mediterranean cuisines. Specifically Balkan cuisine and maybe Ethiopian & Nigerian food since I love spice.

Suzanne: You co-owned a bakeshop called Goodies and Sweets. Can you tell us a little about what got you started? What would you say was your bakeshop's staying power?

Tabbie: It was handed down from my mother, who always enjoyed cooking and baking. Both my parents love to cook, which I inherited my passion for cooking and baking from. My father was the original family gourmand. The great strength of the bake shop, I would say, was the quality of our cakes aside from the variety we used to offer in our menu. These translated to customer satisfaction, thus customer loyalty.

Suzanne: How have you pursued your inherent passion for cooking and baking since? What would you say makes food beautiful? What memorable dishes have become a family legacy?

Tabbie: I have pursued my love for cooking and baking through my family and friends. Having get-togethers to enjoy good company, while having the cuisines I made. Food brings people together, that's what all people from different classes, cultures, and ages can agree on or is the one commonality. It feeds both the physical and psychological "being" of a person. Not one dish or cuisine calls to me or to us (in the family).

I always liked new things or experimented with new dishes, growing up and even now. My friends say my superpower is feeding people, always keeping in mind their preferences, or if they have allergies to something and making a special dish just for them. I've been called GOAT (Greatest of All Time) by my kids and their friends for all the cupcakes I've made for every school activity, birthday, or get-together they had since preschool.

Suzanne: What is life generally like at your home?

Tabbie: Generally, it is exciting and boring; quiet and noisy; relaxing and annoying just like most homes. We enjoy food, cooking, and eating as a family. Good food is part of celebrating our family. We have no fixed preferences, except when we have an opportunity to be all together under one roof and one table. We take the time to all be together and present as a family.

Suzanne: Can you tell us what was the vision behind the Ortigas developments?

Tabbie: The motto of Ortigas Land is "We build great places for life." It's been building many shopping centers, offices, condos, restaurants, and bars for nearly a hundred years. It continues to build "modern landscapes and cultivate integrated communities."

Suzanne: Given the long history and legacy of Ortigas Land in shaping the urban landscape, how has this helped shape who you are today?

Tabbie: Being brought up into a family where philanthropy was just a common occurrence—both grandmothers were involved in so many causes, even my grand Aunt Consuelo Madrigal Collantes, who I was very close to, was well known for her philanthropic endeavors—has instilled in me a sense of responsibility and community. It has developed my sense of empathy and has broadened my perspective of the world.

Suzanne: How are global environmental threats such as climate change affecting real estate development? How is Ortigas Land planning the urban landscape to adapt to the changing environment?

Tabbie: As with any real estate development company worth its salt, having urban planning consultants who are attuned to environmental and climatological concerns is extremely important. We should always do our best to see the bigger picture in terms of combining profitability with social responsibility.

ARMAS DE ORTIG

Suzanne: What do you think of cities that have been referred to as "sponge cities"? Is there a room to grow in this arena for the Philippines' metropolitan areas?

Tabbie: Yes, sponge cities have been found as effective in addressing flooding and managing water reserves. As more developers continue to expand existing cities and create new areas, putting in or creating a sponge city system would greatly benefit companies, homes, and people in these locations. Given the challenges in metro areas in the Philippines, integrating this design would address many current issues to manage floods, water shortages, and even cleanliness.

Suzanne: What trends do you foresee in the near future in terms of real estate and urban planning in the country?

Tabbie: Possibly more green urban planning, and hopefully, smart cities.

Suzanne: As a member of the Consular Corps of the Philippines, what charities and advocacies have you spearheaded? Which ones are the most special and meaningful to you?

Tabbie: I had a tendency to focus on social development projects. Specifically, they were activities that bring people together to build a sense of community, and at the same time to have the proceeds benefit the specific sustainable community development goals of our pre-identified beneficiaries. For example, we did a bike run for mangrove reforestation and a project with Conservation International. I have always liked to focus on sustainable development projects since this combines economic progress, social equity, and responsibility for the environment. It is not only giving money to a community to help, but also a means that everyone now has access to the same opportunities and outcomes and knowing they now are responsible or have a day into their own growth and progress.

Suzanne: In your opinion, how would this year's 72nd Miss Universe Pageant hosted by El Salvador relevantly impact the Philippine private and public sectors? Do you predict more robust tourism activities, more visitors, investors, emigrants–either way–because of this one single global event?

Tabbie: Each country, whether big or small, ranked as first world or otherwise, should always strive to host such global events. These will not only bring economic opportunities for the private sector of the host country but will also allow the public sector to show the world the opportunities for cultural exchanges and government to government agreements for development. This is in line with President Bukele's plans to expand El Salvador's tourism and business opportunities.

Suzanne: How do you define beauty in the context of a pageant such as Miss Universe? If you were to participate as a judge, what would you consider to be the most important qualities in a candidate?

Tabbie: For me, beauty in the context of Miss Universe should weigh heavily on a holistic foundation that must include mental acuity, along with grace and sincerity. Since "beauty" is very subjective, it must transcend the physical and take into account that which is "non" and what makes the individual or woman as a "whole person."

Suzanne: How are Filipina and El Salvadorian women similar? What binds them?

Tabbie: The Philippines has strong and historical ties to Spain, specifically through Latin America, by way of the Acapulco Galleon Trade Route. Given these generations long historical and cultural sharing, Filipinos and Filipinas have much that they share with Latinos and Latinas from countries like El Salvador, ranging from looks, language, cuisine, and even temperament. One thing that stood out in my visits to El Salvador is how hospitable the people are, making them a lot like Filipinos who are very open, warm, and compassionate. As a woman, I connect with Salvadorenas through their independent hard-working natures and their devotions to their families.

Suzanne: On that note, as a Filipina wife and mother, what is the sweetest gift you could possibly give your family?

Tabbie: Time... by being present for them and each other. The attention you give shows love, care, and respect. It builds stronger emotional bonds between each member of the family.

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ROXIE CINEMA

Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Versailles with Pat Cleveland, Stephen Burrows and Antonio Contreras

ROXIE
OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2023
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BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!
Winward HOME
outdoor PATIO

San Francisco, a city known for its vibrant arts and culture scene, recently hosted an extraordinary evening at the iconic nonprofit cinema, The Roxie. This memorable event was dedicated to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Versailles, a historic fashion show that reshaped the industry, and honoring two fashion icons, Pat Cleveland and Stephen Burrows. The evening was a harmonious blend of cinema, fashion and history.

The festivities kicked off at 518 Valencia Street, adorned with white orchids in honor of the legendary designer Halston, who played a pivotal role in the Battle of Versailles. This elegant prelude, courtesy of Wynward Home, set the tone for a night of style, invoking the spirit of Halston and the Battle of Versailles.

The Caviar Co., known for its exquisite caviar and champagne, added a touch of class to the evening, making attendees feel like they were transported to the streets of Paris in the 1970s or New York City's Bowery street in the 1980s. The combination of delicate caviar and bubbly champagne was a sensory delight.

Guests were greeted by the presence of La Gran Dame of jewelry, Rosalina Lydster, and "arbiter elegantie" Joel Goodrich, who exemplified the epitome of style. The best in the arts and culture, including Tiffany's Mark Sullivan, designer Celia Tejada, legendary DJ Steve Fabus, Winward Home's Victoria Tai, Petra Higby, Jacqueline Pio Roda, LGBTQ+ pioneering activist Donna Personna, Heide Betz, one of the hottest designers of the moment Bach Mai, and many more luminaries from various industries graced the event with their presence.

The evening continued at The Roxie Theatre, where Executive Director Lex Sloan extended a warm welcome to the audience, setting the stage for the night's festivities. Joel Goodrich, with his characteristic charm, opened the event by proclaiming, "Half of San Francisco's best-dressed people are here tonight," capturing the essence of the fashionable and vibrant gathering that had assembled for this unforgettable celebration.

Joel, Jacqueline, Victoria, Antonio

Antonio, Pat, Ruben Flores, Rosalina Lydster

Joel, Roslaina , Antonio

Polifor
SAN FRANCI
Joel
Goodric
LeCheval
Restaurant
BEDROOM
Outlet
Winward
HOME
LUXURY
KEVAN
HALL
MoAD
MARK RHOADES
BJ Wasserman, Pernella Sommerville

Fariba Zolnasr, Ruben Flores

Pernella, Antonio

Neiman Marcus
Poliform San Francisco
Joel Goodrich
LeCheval Restaurant
A1
Bedroom Outlet
Winward Home
Luxury
Kevan Hall
Antonio's Closet Productions
MoAD
Mark Rhoades

Jacqueline Pio Roda, Antonio, Barbara Lee

Caviar Co

Donna Personna, Antonio

Jim Leigh, Kay Leigh, Kristof Johnson and Fiona Hoopes

Kristof Johnson, Isaiah Paul Garcia, Antonio and Ruben Cruz

Ludmila Kisseleva, Aizhan Kadyr, Joel Goodrich, Amethyst H. Sallinger

Nathan DeHart, Aizhan Kadyr, Amethyst H. Sallinger, Yelena Lena

Poliform
SAN FRANCISCO
Joel Goodrich
LeCheval Restaurant
Neiman Marcus
A1
BEDROOM Outlet
Winward HOME

Pernella Sommerville , Antonio

ANTONIO'S CLOSET PRODUCTIONS
MoAD
MARK RHOADES

Stephen Burrows, Pat Cleveland, Antonio

Victoria Tai, Jacqueline, Antonio, Petra

Valerie Orsoni, Joel Goodrich, Tiffany Wong

Ruben Flores, Mark Sullivan, Andy Tidwell

Petra and Antonio and Brad Kuerbis

Ruben Flores, Jacqueline Pio Roda, Petra Higby, Antonio

Mark Rhoades, Stephen Burrows, Pat Cleveland, Antonio, Joel

Stephen Burrows, Pat Cleveland, Paul Van Ravenstein

Sheila Ash

THE CAVIAR CO.

Valerie Orsoni and Celia Tejada

Jacqueline Pio Roda, Antonio, Barbara Lee

Jim Leigh, Kay Leigh, Kristof Johnson and Fiona Hoopes

Nathan DeHart, Antonio, Lisa Rostokof

Ryan Van Norman and Carole Chan

Antonio and Lex Sloan

Antonio and Lex

Antonio Cabral and Antonio

Host Joel Goodrich

Carolyn Tyler, Mark Rhoades, Pat Cleveland and Heide Betz

Carolyn Tyler, Stephen Burrows

Host Rosalina Lydster

Proclamation

Joel Goorcih, Heide and Lawrence Wong

Joel, Heide Betz , Antonio

Mark Rhoades

Panel

The Duchess

Thomas Farner, Ruben Cruz

Award winning director, Antonio Contreras, presented two of his acclaimed movies, “Exuberance” and “The Girl From 7th Avenue.” “Exuberance” delved into the fascinating story of Tanel Bedrossaintz, the first gender-fluid model in modern history and Jean Paul Gaultier’s muse and close friend. This groundbreaking film featured a rare recording of Madonna proclaiming Tanel as her favorite model on national French TV, and it also had Jean Paul Gaultier himself creating a Vogue magazine cover for the film’s press release in 2021. “Exuberance” received the prestigious awards for Best Documentary and Best Sound Design at the International Fashion Film Awards the same year.

The second film, “The Girl From 7th Avenue,” narrated by fashion icon Pat Cleveland herself, offered a glimpse into some of her most tumultuous years in the fashion industry, including her pivotal role in the Battle of Versailles and the early 1980s. This film had garnered international acclaim, winning awards for Best Documentary and Best Animation in Paris and La Jolla.

A highlight of the evening was the special and rare appearance of Stephen Burrows a true fashion icon who defined the 1970s with his signature clingy and colorful designs, known for the iconic lettuce hem. Yves Saint Laurent once described him as the designer to look out for in the 1970s. Burrows made history during the Versailles fashion show when, for the first time ever, a model “vogued” on the runway.

The presence of Stephen Burrows and Pat Cleveland was met with immense excitement, and attendees were eager to catch a glimpse of these living legends who had significantly impacted the fashion world.

After the screenings, Carolyn Tyler conducted an exquisite Q&A session with the filmmaker, Antonio Contreras, and the fashion legends, Pat Cleveland, Stephen Burrows and Joel Goodrich.

Attendees had the opportunity to gain insights into their remarkable journeys and experiences in the fashion industry.

The crowning moment of the evening arrived when Mark Rhoades presented a proclamation from Mayor London Breed, declaring October 4th, 2023, as Stephen Burrows Day. This gesture underscored the immense influence and contributions of Stephen Burrows to the world of fashion.

In summary, the extraordinary evening at The Roxie was a splendid fusion of cinema, fashion, and history. It paid homage to the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Versailles while honoring fashion luminaries Pat Cleveland and Stephen Burrows.

The event brought together a dazzling array of talent and creativity, making it a night to remember in the vibrant tapestry of San Francisco’s arts and culture scene. It celebrated the enduring power of fashion and its ability to transcend time, transporting attendees back to iconic moments in fashion history.

JOEL GOODRICH

Hosts A Sparkling Evening

by Heide VanDoren Betz

Joel Goodrich

Arriving at Joel Goodrich's annual Holiday Cocktail Party a few split-second double takes could be felt by some guests wondering if perhaps... just perhaps... they had awakened with jet-lag at Versailles, or maybe a secret room at the Ritz Hotel in Paris, or an over-the-Olympus grand billionaire event in a far off fantasy island. No, it was indeed Joel's home set in a penthouse in one of Nob Hill's iconic Pre-War buildings overlooking the San Francisco Skyline and the Bay.

The unveiling of a unique new design project done in conjunction with Sophie Azouaou of Sophisticate Interiors served as an added delight at the party. Inspired by the former Alain Ducasse restaurant at the Plaza Athene in Paris, installations of glittering Swarovski crystals, in the shape of inverted pyramids, hang from the ornate ceiling in the living and adjacent dining rooms. Surrounded by classic French ceiling moldings, newly gilded by artist Sharon Costello, these latest installations created a fantasy-like and scintillating environment for the festive event.

More than 100 guests, including old friends and San Francisco's recent glitterati from the social, philanthropic, cultural, tech and art worlds, representing many of the City's Best-Dressed list, enjoyed sumptuous hors d'oeuvres and Veuve Clicquot champagne from Aaron Jonas Catering.

At least one guest, Mark Calvano, commented: "This is the highest-energy, most glamorous cocktail party I have ever been to in a long time." Many agreed.

Mark Calvano, Jacqueline Pio Roda, Ryan Pio Roda, Navid Armstrong, Anne Laury, Antonio Contreras, Pernella Sommerville, Claudia Juestel, Joel Goodrich and Daru Kawalkowski

Amara Okoli, Joel Goodrich, Pernella Sommerville and Alexandra Liss

Carol Liu, Nancy Lam, Joel Goodrich, Human Abaj and Alan Fox

Sydney Espinosa and Joel Goodrich

Robbie Ranan, Joel Goodrich and Tim Banderi

Eric Floyd, Elaine Mellis and Joel Goodrich

Sydney Espinosa, Claudia Juestel, Joel Goodrich and Kelly Menendez

Kari Coomans and Joel Goodrich

Matt Grademan, Po Nguyen and Joel Goodrich

Mark Calvano and Joel Goodrich

Pernella Sommerville and Elisa Stephen

Heide Betz and Joel Goodrich

Antonio Contreras and Joel Goodrich

Ivan Bekichev and Stephanie Ng

Dakota Hileman, Joel Goodrich, Jason West and Sydney Espinosa

Joel Goodrich, Melodie Pacheco and Chase Johnson

Amara Okoli, Joel Goodrich, Pernella Sommerville and Alexandra Liss

Heide Betz, Goio Tran, Charles Baker III and Teresa Rodriguez

Goio Tran, Heide Betz and Joel Goodrich

Roman Gronkowski, Sandra Farris, Barbara Brown, Joel Goodrich and Athena Blackburn

Roberta Sherman, Timothy Blackburn and Athena Blackburn

Sophie Azouaou, Joel Goodrich and Bip Apollo

Roberta Sherman, Sophie Azouaou and Clara Shayevich

Ed Winger, Charles Baker III, Aubrey Brewster and Sophie Azouaou

Rosalyn Chen and Joel Goodrich

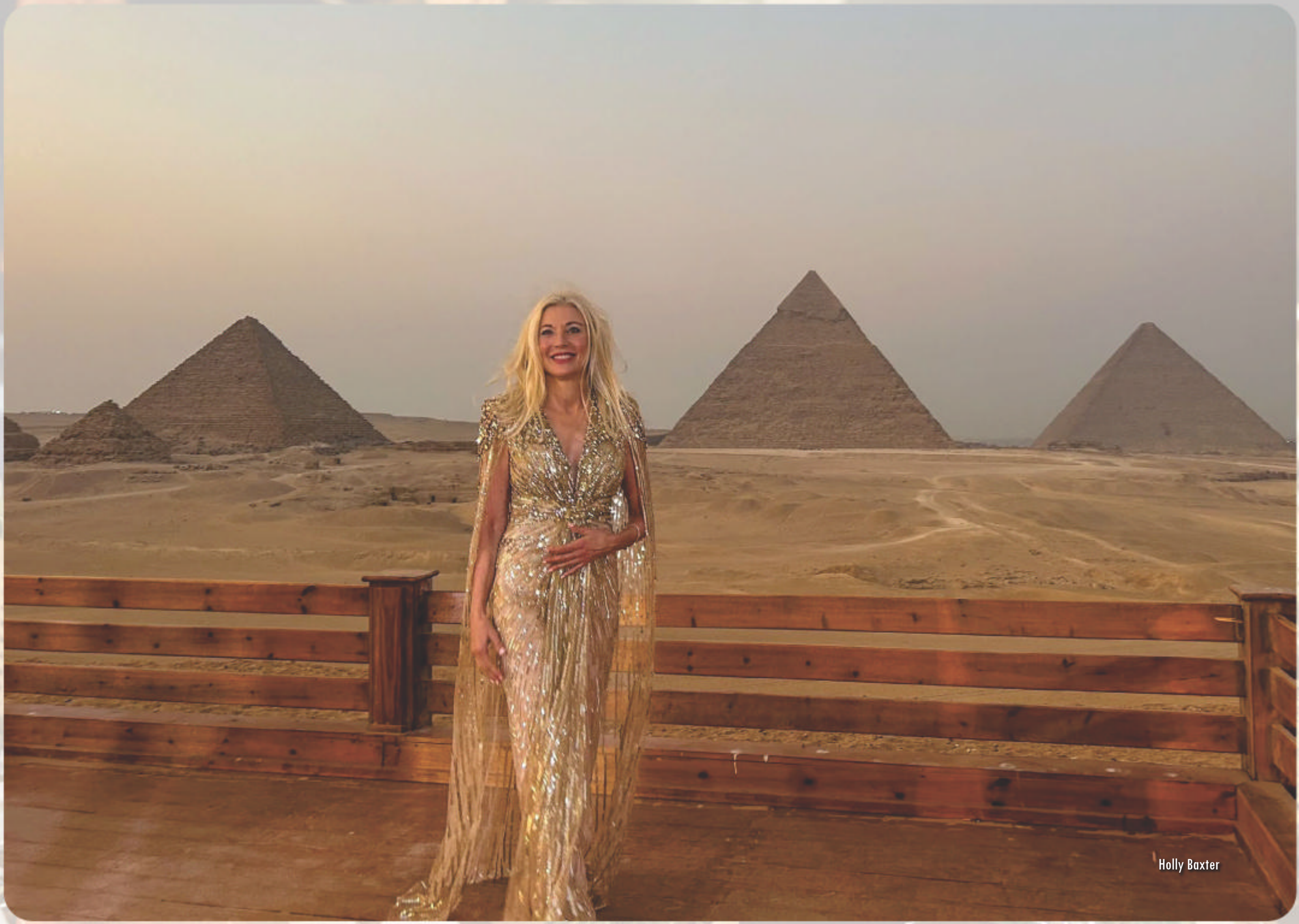
Joel Goodrich and Navid Armstrong

Pernella Sommerville and Antonio Contreras

THE ULTIMATE BIRTHDAY EVENT

Celebrating Holly Baxter's Birthday at the Pyramids of Giza
Friendship, Love, Laughter, Art and History

by Heide VanDoren Betz



Holly Baxter

Imagine stepping into an opulent tent set in the heart of the Egyptian desert, overlooking the pyramids of Giza. A celebration is about to unfold – a celebration of Holly Baxter's Birthday! Friends traveled from the Bay Area, Seattle, Toronto, New York, Paris and Amsterdam to the Egyptian desert, everyone filled with anticipation and excitement to savor this lavish event in an oasis under the starlit desert sky .

Ornate, orientalized arches led to the tent, a creation of diaphanous flowing linens and silks blowing in the nights breezes with richly colored fabrics creating illusions of walls – a sense of intimacy and luxury at once.

As if this were not enough – suddenly the Pyramids of Giza came alive (a nightly light display), a truly breathtaking sight emerging on the horizon of the desert scape. OH MY! The soft glow of the base lights enhanced the majestic beauty of arguably the most famous ancient structures in the world, casting dramatic shadows that highlighted their impressive architecture. As the desert breezes continued to sweep across the landscape, (yes! hair and gowns were blowing in the wind) there was a sense of excitement and mystery in the air, where one could not help but to marvel at the wonders of the past and contemplate the rich history surrounding us that very moment.

As the evening progressed, low lights glowed over the elegantly decorated tables. Chefs had prepared a feast – presenting a fusion of flavors inspired by the region. As plates adorned with delectable dishes were served, each a work of culinary art showcasing the vibrant colors and aromas of the desert's bounty, music filled the tent, perfect for lively conversations, joyous laughter and dancing of course.

This combination of the cool desert breezes, the artistry of the tent, the excitement of the guests, delectable gourmet dining, music, and the ethereal glow of the pyramids created a mystical and unforgettable experience. " Egyptian Chic" was the requested attire and guest did not disappoint with designers Cavalli, Versace, Indian Sherwanis, Egyptian Caftans, Armani. The star of the evening ,Holly Baxter in the most stunning gold Jenny Packham gown (worn by Princess of Wales a few months ago) outshone the pyramids. Time stood still.

It was a celebration that embraced the richness of the desert and the joy of coming together, creating memories that will be cherished for a lifetime.

Holly Baxter: "We don't know what the future holds for any of us; what lifts us up is celebrating life, love and friendship".

Happy Birthday, Holly.

Heide Betz

Eussel Martinelli, Rosalyn Chen, Nancy Lam, Jennifer Carrenard and Jason Gan

Holly Baxter

Claudia Juestel and Holly Baxter

Holly Baxter and Dr. Zahi Hawass

Nancy Lam

Holly Baxter

Kellie Menendez and Kenneth Birdwell

Kellie Menendez

Holly Baxter and Dr. Zahi Hawass

Russel Martinelli and Nancy Lam

Tonny Baars abd Mark Calvano

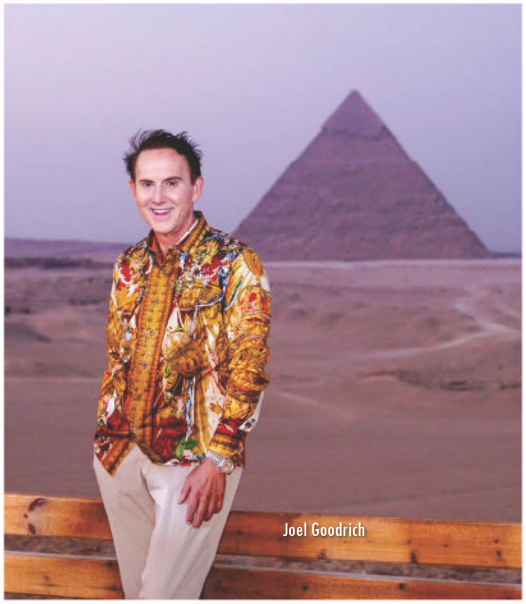
Kellie Menendez

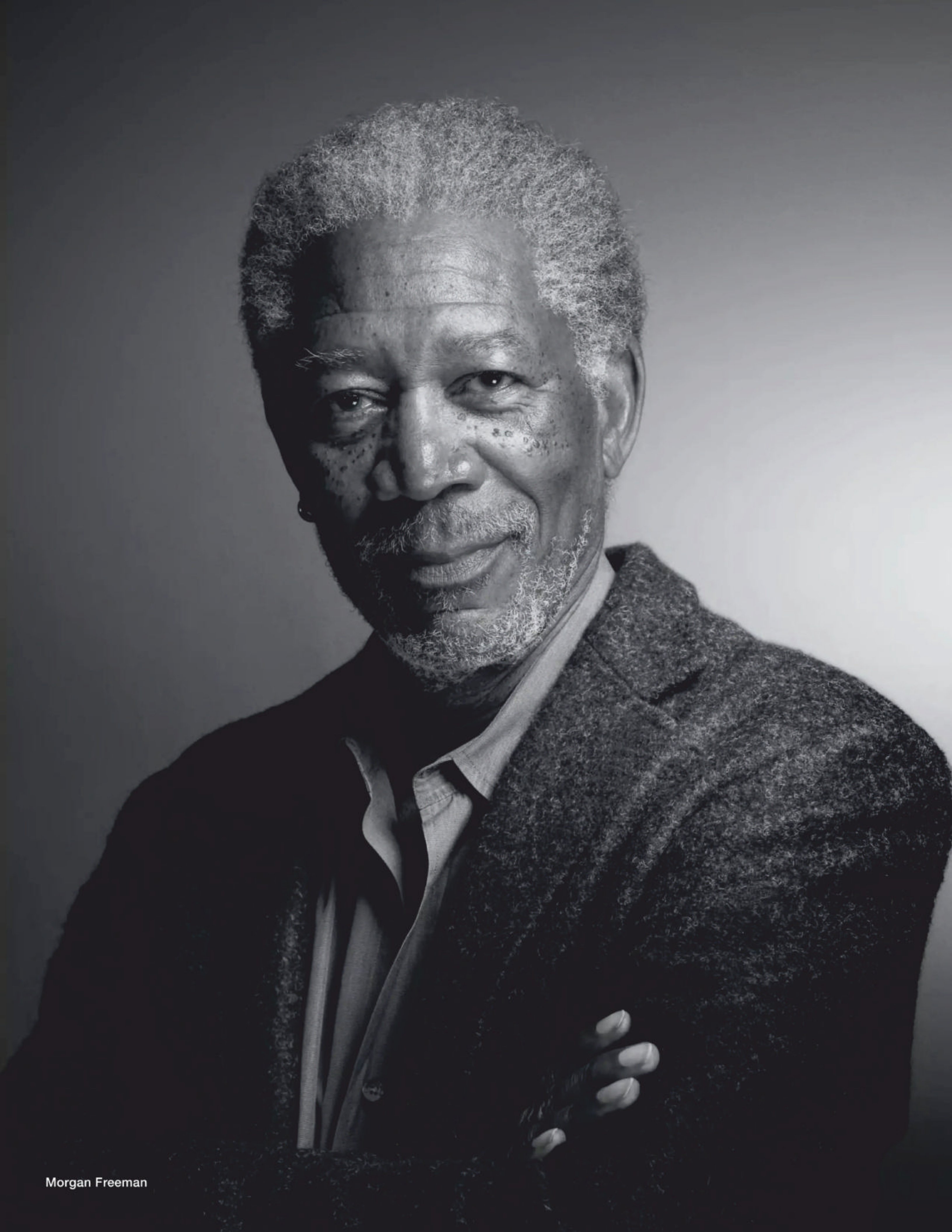
Anjan Mitra

Russel Martinelli

Kellie Menendez, Holly Baxter and Sara Goulder

Heide Betz and Joel Goodrich


Joel Goodrich



Morgan Freeman

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